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Did Anderson Columns Stir Qaddafi to Act?

Although it has been suggested that Muammar Qaddafi's desire to kill President Reagan stems from the embarrassment he suffered when two Libyan aircraft were shot down by American forces last August, intelligence experts contacted by HUMAN EVENTS believe the U.S. media may have provoked Qaddafi into sending his death squads to kill the President by publishing false stories of CIA plots against the Libyan dictator.

There is no question that the unstable Qaddafi believes the U.S. is out to get him. During a December 6 interview on ABC he claimed that the U.S. government was "preparing to assassinate me, to poison my food," and he then made a passing reference to the CIA.

Qaddafi didn't produce any evidence of such a plot. His claim that the U.S. wants to poison his food appears to have been lifted straight out of a Jack Anderson column that appeared in many U.S. newspapers on August 25. Anderson claimed that "CIA plotters" had come up with a scheme to kill the Libyan dictator by using a "deadly poison" which could be squirted into his food and drink or injected into his skin through a tiny black dart.

Such stories, though denounced as false by intelligence sources in this country, are "taken seriously" in Libya, according to a New York *Times* reporter, Alan Cowell, who recently visited the country. The Soviets, who have a vested interest in the longevity of Qaddafi, having supplied him with vast amounts of military hardware, have also taken the stories seriously by publicizing them through their propaganda arms, Radio Moscow and the TASS news agency.

Interestingly, Anderson claimed in his column that there was "one bugaboo" that troubled the CIA's "more thoughtful strategists." He said, "Assassination is a game that anyone can play, and the tempestuous Qaddafi has his own killer squads that might ambush President Reagan in retaliation."

What Anderson failed to recognize was that mere news reports might provoke such retaliation. *Newsweek* magazine also carried a much-publicized story about a CIA plan to "destabilize" and ultimately topple Qaddafi.

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American press." According to the *Times*, "the official noted that United States regulations on intelligence operations prevented its security agencies from participating in assassination attempts against foreign leaders. Nevertheless, he added, two press reports had indicated that the CIA was planning to kill Col. Qaddafi.

"'These reports had no factual basis,' the official said, 'but they may well have helped to stir some of the Libyan activity we are now seeing.'"

Rep. Edward P. Boland (D.-Mass.), chairman of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, pointed out in a July 28 statement that "there is a clear and emphatic prohibition against assassination by U.S. intelligence agencies" in the Executive Order that regulates those agencies.

Nevertheless, the Soviet news agency TASS milked the Anderson column for all it was worth. On the same day that the Anderson story appeared in the U.S. press, TASS carried a story reporting that the "well informed" Jack Anderson had implicated top U.S. officials in a scheme to kill Qaddafi, a reference to Anderson's claim that the White House was "aware" of the CIA's alleged anti-Libya plotting. TASS repeated Anderson's claim that the CIA had plans to use a poison against Qaddafi.

TASS, as well as Radio Moscow, exploited other anti-CIA columns that Anderson produced in August which alleged that the CIA was "preparing to join forces with totalitarian regimes and anti-Communist factions" and was "actively planning undercover operations" in cooperation with such countries as Egypt, Israel, Turkey, Pakistan, Guatemala, South Africa, South Korea and Communist China.

TASS claimed that Anderson had revealed a "comprehensive program" by the CIA "for stepping up subversive and terrorist operations against sovereign countries and national liberation movements."

The information in the Anderson columns was attributed to "CIA sources" who were not identified. Also mentioned was a "top-secret planning document," said to be dated May 9, 1981, written by CIA Director William Casey and labeled, "Draft Covert Operations Planning Document Africa-Middle East." Anderson said a copy of the document had been made available to his associ-

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